



6th February 2016

**Bee Improvement for All (BIFA) Day
BIBBA/North Staffordshire BKA**

A one day course to help and encourage beekeepers of all abilities to improve their bees, using simple methods that are available to all beekeepers. It is a pleasure to raise your own queens from good docile stock that is best suited to your conditions, rather than simply buying imported queens that may come from a different climate, with the added danger of importing pests and diseases we haven't got. This is one of a number of similar events that have been held recently throughout the U.K.

Roger Patterson is a practical beekeeper who has been keeping bees since 1963.

He lectures widely and writes articles for magazines that help beekeepers of all abilities improve their bees and beekeeping.

He owns and runs Dave Cushman's website.

Cost £11:50, Under 18s £8:00

Bookings Angela Fearon angelafearon@googlemail.com

Editor's note:

Can I take this opportunity to wish all our members a Very Happy and Prosperous New Year.

At this festive point it is easy to forget about our bees and the need to still carry out occasional checks at the apiary to ensure that mouse guards are still in place and the entrances are clear of dead bees and/ or snow if we have any. Also be sure that all your hives are secure and well weighted to prevent any storm damage.

We had two hives blown over at the Longsdon Apiary. This happened during the strong winds at the beginning of December...despite having a weight on the top of both.

Fetes and Agricultural Shows

Throughout the year the Association attends a number of shows to promote our craft and we are looking for willing volunteers to represent the association at such events.

If you feel you could give one day to help then please contact Committee member David Booth to discuss..

The first of these will be the Endon Well dressing which is scheduled for the end of May bank holiday

AGM 2016

At.....the Friends Meeting House, Miller Street, Newcastle-under-Lyme

Time... 7:00 for 7:30

This is the time to question the committee and put forward your ideas

The committee will be proposing we leave the BDI (Bee Disease Insurance)...see link for more.

The Trustees Report and Financial Statement have been published in advance...see link for more.

jan meeting

BDI info: <http://northstaffsbees.org.uk/bdi-is-it-worth-it/>

Reports: <http://northstaffsbees.org.uk/reports/>





a look at the honey show 2015

Firstly a big 'Thank You' to all who helped in any way to make the 2015 Honey Show another successful occasion. Many members participated and helped the day to run smoothly. From the people who turned up early to set the room out, those who helped with the admin and judging, to the group who made and organised the afternoon tea, the speaker Chris Park and honey judge Terry Ashley and of course the people who submitted their products, you all played a very important part. The Honey Show was again an excellent team effort.

For those of you who were unable to attend, the 2015 NSBKA Honey Show comprised of: Honey and Honey products judged by Terry Ashley (from South Cheshire), a talk by Chris Park, (skep maker and skep beekeeper from Wiltshire and chair of the newly formed British Beekeeping Heritage Society) on 'Mead, Mythology and Medicine' and afternoon tea followed by feedback from the Show Judge. Around 50 people attended during the day.

There was time to help members who needed it prior to benching their products and for members old and new to meet socially over tea. Many senior members were available to mentor those less experienced in showing, which added to the development of beekeeping skills. The excellent afternoon tea was provided by a group of volunteers this year, which helped to spread the work.

2015 Honey Show entries

This year's Honey Show attracted 65 entries from 18 competitors (compared with 34 entries from 15 competitors in 2015). The Black jar class continued to be well supported with 13 entries (11 in 2014) and Class 1 had 8 entries (5 in 2015). There were entries in a greater number of classes this year, only 4 classes did not have any entries compared with 8 last year. The Judge was complementary about the standard of the entries but pointed out that a greater attention to detail would have helped some entries.

The number of entries was the highest for more than 10 years and more members will be receiving cash prizes and cups. A total of £165 will be awarded in cash prizes.

The awards will be presented at our AGM in January so please be sure you are there to collect your winnings.

The winners are:	Mick Hilditch	Ron Clewes	Angela Fearon
	P&D Apiaries	Anson Berrisford	D&K Ratcliffe
	M&D Teasdale	Jean Colduck	Melanie Bishop
	Mark Bloor	Brian Holdcroft	J&P Green

Again well done all!

Margaret Teasdale

NSBKA Honey Show Manager

Cup Winners

MYATT CHALLENGE CUP & £25 -Mick Hilditch
 C. JOYNSON RICHARDS " MELLIFICA CHALLENGE CUP - Ron Clewes
 TOMKINSON CUP & £20 - Angela Fearon
 CUMBERLIDGE-JOHNSON CHALLENGE CUP & £10 -P&D Apiaries
 WAX CRAFT - SPECIAL PRIZE & £10 -Ron Clewes
 THE MYATT MEMORIAL SHIELD & £10 -Anson Berrisford
 THE C. J. HORTON PHOTOGRAPHIC CLASS & £10- D&K Ratcliffe
 Myatt Challenge 'Ladies' Cup -M&D Teasdale
 Myatt Individual Challenge 'Ladies' Cup & £10 -J Colduck
 Leek Challenge Cup & £10 -Mick Hilditch
 NSBKA 'New 2015' Challenge Cup -M&D Teasdale



Other First Prize winners (£5 each class):

Class 2 -Melanie Bishop, Class 3 & 8 -Mick Hilditch, Class 4 -P&D Apiaries, Class 5 -Mark Bloor
 Class 10 -Ron Clewes, Class 11&17 -Brian Holdcroft, Class 12& 15 -M&D Teasdale,
 Class 13 -Anson Berrisford, Class 16 -J&P Green,
 Class 17 -Jean Colduck

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Before you spend all your money in the, very tempting, New Year Sales, please give some thought to your

NSBKA subscription renewal which will be due on February 1st 2016. Renewal emails and letters will be sent out after the subscription rates are confirmed at the AGM on January 6th 2016 at the Quakers Meeting House. Why not come along to the AGM and give your input?"

Early payment helps our Members Secretary Chas Burgin and Treasurer David Booth and saves time and money in sending out reminders to late payers.



The BBKA are asking for members to take part in the following survey which is open until New Years Eve....

HAVE YOUR SAY!

Over the last twelve years BBKA membership has grown significantly from 8,463 to 25,572 members. In that time Beekeeping interests have changed -in 2003 most were interested in honey production.

Like many organisations that have grown rapidly, our structure and ways of working need to adapt. So, the time has come to ask some questions to enable us to move forward.

The survey is **only** open to BBKA members and is anonymous. To participate you will need to log into the members area of the [BBKA website](#).

If you have problems doing so please contact the administration team for assistance - 02476 690666

You are a member of the BBKA, have your say now!

Trentham Gardens Estate Apiary opportunity

I was contacted a month or so ago by Trentham Gardens who would like to have beehives within their estate. They are looking for an experienced beekeeper willing to place and maintain hives.

They are quite open to where the hives would be situated and would provide the necessary protection, fencing etc, to ensure the public are kept at a safe distance.

The beekeeper would have free access to the estate via the trade entrance and would be issued with a pass.

There would be some obligation by the beekeeper to talk to the public, on occasions, about beekeeping. Exactly what that entails would need to be discussed.

As I understand it the estate recently established a considerable area of wild flower meadow and of course there are the nationally important gardens within bee flying distance.

Also I understand that there is the opportunity to sell any honey produced in a shop on the estate.

If you are interested then please get in touch with me and I will let you have the details of who to contact. They would then invite you to go along and have a chat about the possibilities.

So, if you live within an easy distance of Trentham Gardens and could maintain an out apiary there, then drop me a line -- stewart.boulton@gmail.com

One in ten wild bees face extinction in Europe

A report by the BBC Environment Correspondent Helen Briggs claims that one in ten of our wild bees in Europe are in danger of extinction. There are one thousand nine hundred and sixty five bee species native to Europe and 9.2% of these are on a red list drawn up by the International Union for Conservation of Nature according to the report. The threats are put down to various issues including a loss of habitat, intensive farming, pesticide use, urban development and climate change

A spokesperson for the IUCN suggests that the assessment is the best understanding so far on wild bees but goes on to say that the knowledge is incomplete and puts this down to an "Alarming lack of expertise and resources".

The study highlights the economic value that all bees including hived bees have in terms of pollination alone and it is suggested that urgent investment in research is required to bring forward **the best possible recommendations on how to reverse their decline**.



Full report plus further links.. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-31963056>

Native Dark Bees of Scotland Lots of good stuff here!

link c/o of Ipswich and East Suffolk Newsletter...eBees



<https://scotlandsnature.wordpress.com/2015/10/07/from-beinn-eighe-to-bees/>

Bee....fore.

this item comes from one of our "COMBINGS" newsletters; issued in the days of ink pots and nibs!

The Value of a Member

Ten little members standing in a line,
One disliked the President and then there were nine.

Nine ambitious workers offered to work late,
One forgot her promise and then there were eight.

Eight creative members had ideas as good as heaven,
One lost her enthusiasm and then there were seven.

Seven loyal members got into a fix,
They quarrelled over programmes and then there were six.

Five steadfast members wished there were more,
One became indifferent and then there were four.

Four cheerful members who never disagree,
Till one complained of meetings and then there were three.

Three eager members! What do they do?
One got discouraged and then there were two.

Two lovely members; our rhyme is nearly done,
One joined a bridge club and then there was one.

One faithful member was left feeling blue,
Met with a neighbour and then there were two.

Two earnest members, each enrolled one more,
Doubling the number and then there were four.

Four determined members, just could not wait,
Till each won another and then there were eight.

Eight excited members, signed up sixteen more,
In another six verses there will be a thousand and twenty four.

Remember that membership is everyone's responsibility.

(From WI Cheshire Newsletter - C/O BEES)

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HAVE YOU MONITORED YOUR VARROA?

If the answer is 'No' then you may be in for a nasty shock. I monitored mine at the end of November and was horrified by the natural mite drop. I have spoken to a few other Branch members and the results are mixed. Maybe my bees are the exception but it is best to know what is going on in the hives so that they can be treated as soon as possible if needed. I will be using Api-Bioxal. Having shopped around I found that C. Wynne Jones was the cheapest.

Celia F Davis

article % Warwickshire beekeepers
eBees

Lend your voice



Would you like to help shape the future of the association?

Have you thought about joining the Committee?

If you are interested simply let one of the current Committee members know. We would like to see you there!

Spoonfuls of honey help homeless

A MASSIVE bee colony is helping the homeless in a new honey-making venture, writes Kuba Shand-Baptiste.

Beehives installed on the roof of St Martin's Court-yard in Covent Garden five years ago are yielding huge supplies that are now being sold in stores. All proceeds are going to homeless charity, The Connection.

Art consultant-turned-beekeeper Camilla Goddard (pictured on page 1), who also runs hives at

the Garrick and Old Bailey, said her work was "a beautiful process and a way of being close to nature in London".

Beekeepers have been confronted with a recent government decision to lift a previous ban on certain pesticides that have produced dire results for bees in the past.

Ms Goddard said: "I've personally experienced insecticide poisoning in London about four or five times.

"You get a really fast pile of bees dead or dying outside the hive [because] the bees won't let them in... It is certainly not good for colonies."

She added: "Look for year-round flowering... don't cut your ivy... and plant in blocks so it becomes a really good nectar source."

The honey, produced by the Department of Coffee and Social Affairs at St Martin's Courtyard, starts at £1.

Rediscovering the First recorded Drone Congregation Area

Back in August of 2015 a blog was posted on the Vita Europe website by their blogger Turlough about an attempt to rediscover a Drone Congregation Area on Selborne Common in Hampshire. First found and documented by Gilbert White who was an 18th century Naturalist. The event amused him greatly he suggests although he didn't understand what it was:

Humming in the air

There is a natural occurrence to be met with upon the highest part of our down in hot summer days, which always amuses me much, without giving me any satisfaction with respect to the cause of it; and that is a loud audible humming of bees in the air, though not one insect is to be seen. This sound is to be heard distinctly the whole common through, from the Moneydells, to Mr White's avenue-gate. Any person would suppose that a large swarm of bees was in motion, & playing about over his head. This noise was heard last week on June 28th"

Leaping forward to the 20th century Beowulf Cooper wrote that he had found it again in 1973 but didn't give its precise location.

This then brings us up to the present day with the search being made by the Vita's Blogger.

Giving us details of the surrounding landscape noting that "Selborne Common is on a 200 metre high Greensand plateau on the edge of chalk country". She/he goes on to describe the common as "heavily wooded with many Beech trees and some small clearings". This it's recorded would more than likely have been different in White's day with less wooded areas, mainly due to grazing.

It was in one of these clearings "just before Sheep Down" where the blogger witnesses once again this natural phenomenon using a long fishing rod with a queen lure attached Turlough writes of "being hit on the head a few times by wayward drones an indignity I don't think White suffered" she/he says.

The number of Drones albeit not on a large scale (this may have been down to the time of year...August) was discovered active and enabled a sound recording to be made which is also posted on the blog page.

Turlough finally writes that a return date in June has been set!

further information :

<http://www.vita-europe.com/blog/rediscovering-the-first-recorded-drone-congregation-area/>

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apologies

Programme for speakers covering the period Jan/April....

Unfortunately we were unable to provide a completed list before this Newsletter was published and apologise for this. However once the speakers and dates have been compiled it will be emailed out to all members. Many thanks from the committee